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# Arrest of Aide At U.N. Cited In Spying Fear

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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Aug. 24 — Reagan Administration officials said today that the arrest on Saturday of a Soviet physicist assigned to the United Nations Secretariat illustrated a significant security threat posed by the large Soviet contingent here.

Gennadi Fyodorovich Zakharov, the physicist, was charged with espionage shortly after Federal agents said he received classified documents in a clandestine meeting on a Queens subway platform.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation said Mr. Zakharov received the documents from an unnamed employee of a military subcontractor who had agreed to cooperate with the authorities nearly three years ago. The authorities said Mr. Zakharov had tried to recruit the man, described only as student from a third world country, while the young man was studying computer science at Queens College.

## No Comment at U.N.

A spokesman for the United Nations had no comment on the case. Mr. Zakharov worked as a scientific officer at the Center for Science and Technology for Development, a United Nations office responsible for furthering the transfer of modern technology to developing nations. An official United Nations publication said its duties also include the encouraging of technical cooperation among developing countries.

Mr. Zakharov is one of 492 Soviet nationals who work in various capacities for the United Nations Secretariat, according to the organization's most recent figures. American intelligence analysts estimate that as many as a third of these Russian employees participate in intelligence operations. Their numbers were not affected by the one-third cut in the number of Soviet diplomats at the United Nations recently ordered by President Reagan. The first phase of the reduction will not

take place until next month.

"Because they're supposedly international civil servants, they have always been a counterintelligence problem," a Reagan Administration official said. "It's very, very difficult to put any kind of controls on these people." In the last year, the Administration has put some limits on the ability of the Soviet civil servants to travel in the United States.

A United Nations official who asked not to be named said the organization was aware of the Soviet Union's tendency to dispatch civil servants who pursue "extracurricular activities." He said the United Nations personnel office at times rejected Soviet applicants for positions because of inadequate qualifications, but he acknowledged, "Checking their résumés and credentials in the Soviet Union is difficult."

Diplomats hold immunity from prosecution and can only be expelled from the country if implicated in espionage. A civil servant like Mr. Zakharov has immunity only if his acts are connected with official United Nations duties. He could therefore be sentenced to life in prison if he is convicted of espionage.

Mr. Zakharov, who is being held at the Metropolitan Corrections Center at 160 Park Row, Manhattan, is to be arraigned Monday in Federal District Court in Brooklyn. His lawyer, John Mage, had no comment on the case.

## Impact on U.S.-Soviet Ties

Administration officials said the potential effect on relations between the United States and the Soviet Union was one of several factors weighed before deciding to arrest Mr. Zakharov.

In addition to illuminating the potential problems posed by the Soviet presence at the United Nations, intelligence officials said the Zakharov case demonstrated the methodical patience typical of Russian spies. These officials noted that Mr. Zakharov cultivated the recruit for more than two years before suggesting that he take a job in which he could steal classified documents.

The F.B.I. said the student was paid thousands of dollars to obtain unclassified information on artificial intelligence and robotics from various libraries. After the student graduated in 1985, Mr. Zakharov offered to pay for his graduate school education, the F.B.I. said. The Soviet physicist also encouraged the student to find a job with a high technology company, according to the bureau.

The relationship was made formal with a 10-year contract requiring the recruit to supply classified information, with payments to be based on the quantity and quality of the data.

John L. Hogan, assistant director of the F.B.I. office in New York, said at a news conference late Saturday, "We can see that the Soviets are trying to

develop contacts at a young age, attempting to recruit students." Mr. Hogan said it was difficult to estimate how many students were approached by foreign intelligence officers.

In September, the bureau said, the student recruited by Mr. Zakharov began working for a company that makes components for military aircraft engines and radar equipment. It is a subcontractor for the Bendix Corporation and the General Electric Company. The documents that Mr. Zakharov received Saturday were related to jet engine design, the F.B.I. said.

It was not entirely clear why Soviet intelligence might have chosen Mr. Zakharov to secure classified information from an agent, since he did not have immunity. One American official noted that Mr. Zakharov had been assigned to the United Nations for a four-year tour and had only eight months left to serve in this country.

The Administration official speculated, "He was probably thinking: 'I'm going home soon. I've got to get my ticket punched. I've got to consummate this and get something classified before someone else gets the credit for this guy.'"

The arrest of Mr. Zakharov marked the first time in eight years that a Russian employee of the United Nations was charged with espionage. In the previous case, in 1978, two Soviet employees of the United Nations were convicted of espionage and spent six months in prison before being exchanged for five Soviet dissidents. A Soviet diplomat assigned to the United Nations, who was arrested in the same case, was expelled from the United States because he had immunity.

Earlier this year, President Reagan ordered a one-third reduction, to 170 from 275 in the number of diplomats representing the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Byelorussia at the United Nations. The first 32 of these positions, according to Administration officials, are scheduled to be trimmed next month with the full reduction to be completed by 1988.

In a statement issued March 7, Mr. Reagan declared: "Over the years, the United States Government has made it clear to Soviet authorities its concern that Soviet U.N. missions personnel have engaged in inappropriate activities" and that they "have unfortunately continued to engage in activities unrelated to U.N. business, including espionage."

Even after the reductions, the Soviet mission at the United Nations will remain the largest, followed by the Chinese with 116.